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January 19, 2016

The Honorable William M. Conley
U.S. District Court
Western District of Wisconsin
120 North Henry Street, Room 320
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Honorable Judge William M. Conley,

I am writing you to express my deepest regret for my actions. I understand what I have done and why my actions were wrong. I would like to ask that you consider the following for my sentencing. In this letter I would also like to provide a more detailed background of myself through my own words as well as the circumstances that led up to my actions.

I come from a small almost completely land locked country on the West coast of Africa called The Gambia. Like many immigrants my family and I came to America for better opportunity when I was very young. Gambia is a predominately Muslim country where the teachings and the traditions of Islam are part of the foundation of our culture. My family and I weren't well off by any means but we lived a relatively comfortable life for third world country standards. However, poverty and a lack of resources plague our institutions. There are many that live a life of sustenance. To escape this paradigm we moved to New York and started from scratch, a classic immigrant story. We arrived here legally on a tourist visa but stayed here for years to come with no status at all, I was four years old.

In a city as big as New York, where you live can provide vastly different experiences in how a child grows up. Poverty is rarely the only barrier you have to face.

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For me it was about getting accustomed to a new environment and people who were very different from me. Living in the Bronx was not easy, despite being surrounded by a melting pot of cultures and backgrounds, most people stuck to their own kind. There was a big enough African population that my family and I could feel at home. My mother and father made it a point to warn us of the crime dangers in the Bronx. Although I was young I remembered the constant ring of sirens, horns and the bustling of people. With so many people around there were bound to be conflicts whether it was at school or on the streets we lived in. I did my best to stay out of trouble and harm's way, but that did not prevent me witnessing acts of gang violence at a young age. My parents and I lived in a small one bedroom apartment which they afforded through blue collar work. At that age I couldn't fully understand the need to leave our home in Gambia for lesser standards, nonetheless I appreciated and admired their hard work. My Father someone with a significant amount of education which bore an office and a respected position for the World Health Organization had to start all over as a security guard in Manhattan.

After just a couple years in the Bronx my parents, sister and I made the transition to Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. We had an aunt there that agreed to put us up in her apartment while we searched for one of our own. Wisconsin was much quieter, cheaper and safer than New York. My sister and I quickly adjusted to the environment but not as much to the school. We were foreigners, and in a community where minorities were already scarce we appeared as aliens in a different world. At the time I was in elementary school and wouldn't grow to realize the severity of my handicap until my teen years. I became aware that not only was I figuratively an illegal alien in a society unaccepting of my differences but I was quite literally an illegal alien in regards to my status in the United States.

My sister and I looked differently, spoke differently and even smelled differently than our peers. We strove to assimilate into our community but were still often the object

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of ridicule. I counteracted this by focusing on my academics and athletics. During high school I was involved in a variety of sports, scholar groups and organizations. I competed in Varsity Football, Track and the Academic Decathlon. I participated in the Sun Prairie Scholar Society, an organization for high achieving minorities, as well as DECA, an organization that prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs for careers in marketing, finance, hospitality and management.

In the middle of my high school years is when I began to seriously comprehend the consequences of my illegal status. I needed to begin working to help support my family but could not do so because I had no social security number or work authorization. My only choice was to work under the table, which I began doing at various restaurants as well as other ad hoc positions. I also educated myself on the circumstances of being an illegal immigrant, although I felt like I was the only one among my peers I knew this was the reality of millions of undocumented aliens living in America. I started to fear whether or not I could obtain my dream of going to college. With the assistance of my scholar groups, family and friends I walked the path towards a secondary institution. I applied to many different schools, took the ACT and SAT. Unfortunately during this process I would come to find out that I couldn't receive or accept any type of government aide, this dealt a swift blow to any chances of affording many private and certain public institutions. Luckily I had a reasonably affordable and prestigious option in the University of Wisconsin – Madison, which I happily took.

To me UW-Madison was a blank canvas for me to paint an amazing experience with course work and community involvement. I tried to hit the ground running immediately. One way I did so was through early involvement in Greek life on campus within a social and professional fraternity, Theta Chi and Alpha Kappa Psi respectively. Greek life seemed like the anti-thesis to my conservative Muslim upbringing. I only knew what I saw through movies and media, a counter culture of binge drinking and

debauchery. I soon learned that this was a common misconception. I had the pleasure of being a part of the founding father class of Theta Chi and given the chance to battle this prejudice. I did so as an executive board member and recruitment chairmen, subsequently helping lead our "Interest Group" of 12 members to re-chartering with a class of 35 gentlemen. At the same time I was involved in multiple organizations including the Real Estate Club one of the largest student run organizations on campus, open to both undergraduate and graduate students. The club met multiple times a semester to learn from industry professionals and practitioners on a variety of topics including debt markets, REITS and developments. I was a club officer who was tasked to plan, organize and execute all social functions and the end of the year banquet, as well as facilitate networking and professional development.

My education was not without some troubles and by no means am I perfect student. There were a few instances where I had to face disciplinary measures. One involved my fraternity brothers needed someone to purchase beer for an event. I did not drink at the time neither was I present for the actual event but I volunteered to procure the alcohol using a family friends Identification. The event was stopped by a police officer and one of the questions that arose was who purchased the beer, I admitted wrongdoing. There was another situation where I was given extra time for an exam from my professor whom I explained I had a disability that being (ADHD). Although I have a diagnosis of the learning disability (one of the key factors in receiving such testing assistance) I was ultimately given an academic warning. The professor did not have to give me the grade I earned on the exam, so he made the decision to give me a failing grade. Finally during the fall exam period of 2013 I was reprimanded for not properly citing sources for a paper. My professors wanted me correct/redo my work for a re-grade, because they felt extenuating circumstances warranted it. The assistant Dean of Students sought for a more severe punishment arguing that this could be a pattern, the committee tasked with making

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any disciplinary decisions ruled in the middle. I was suspended for a half of a year and during this time I needed to prepare a 10 page paper on Integrity, redo the work and take a short online seminar. All of which I did, however the incomplete grade in the course has yet to be rectified. This along with an outstanding tuition bill is halting my degree. I have reached out to the professors multiple times but have received no reply. Nonetheless I understand that it was my own poor decision making that led me to be in such a position.

More than 1 million immigrant children without legal status reportedly live in the United States. Roughly 65,000 graduate from high school each year, but experts estimate that fewer than 6,500 go on to attend college. Federal dollars are out of the question and until recently most scholarship funds weren't attainable to immigrants with temporary or no status. Since 2001 18 states have passed legislation have passed legislation extending in-state tuition rates to undocumented students who meet specific requirements. Wisconsin revoked its law in 2011. Affording UW-Madison was an arduous task. The obstacles were clearly defined but I trudged on continually sifting and winnowing to seek further knowledge at the institution as told by the Wisconsin Ideal.

On top of working under the table and in music, I began to broker small marijuana transactions for friends in and out of the Greek system. Marijuana was prevalent across campus and my friends sought my help in leveraging my relationships for the purposes of acquisition and disposition. Chris Christmas, Enis Gashi and Haris Riza to name a few, were part of those who sought just that. I became friends with some of the brothers of The TKE fraternity through a performance I participated in called Humourology. Humourology's mission is to promote community engagement and philanthropic service through creativity and dedication. Humorology, or "Humo" for short, is an annual, juried, musical show that takes place in April of each year. Humorology has been a UW - Madison tradition since 1948, touching the lives of students and the community through

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the friendships that are made, and funds that are raised. Each year, over 600 students spend the course of the academic year on a team (cast), writing, composing, choreographing, and directing original mini-musical comedies. I became close with many of the brothers in TKE both involved and not involved in the play, eventually meeting and becoming good friends with Enis Gashi. Chris Christmas rushed our fraternity and we developed a bond during rush, where I chose him as one of my top choices as a "Little Brother" in the incoming pledge class.

I hardly thought of the legality of being involved in marijuana transactions. I viewed it as a business opportunity and one that helped support a family of undocumented aliens. Early in college I was doing so on a very small scale until eventually meeting different players. Whenever a trip presented itself I would receive a call from Gashi, Riza or sometimes Christmas, subsequently talk to my investors and wait for the venture to conclude. I realize how much of a mistake this was and how much it has impacted my life.

Late in 2012 I was granted Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. An immigration policy that allowed me to receive a two-year renewable work permit and exemption from deportation. I realized that this was not a path to citizenship but the joy brought to me by this executive action was unquestionable. I could start to focus on my career and legally work as well as not worry about deportation. Although some of my employers were sympathetic of my undocumented situation and were able to make alternative arrangements to accommodate me, many were not and I lost a lot of opportunities because of it. It was a huge sigh of relief to be able to apply to many roles with the confidence that I could legally work there.

These charges are of the utmost concern to me. They have and will impact my immigration status, my employment, family, friends and other loved ones. I understand that this was a huge mistake and by no means am I trying to discredit the seriousness of

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this matter. I was stuck abroad for some time fighting to return to America and could not do so. I continued to seek re-entry fully knowing that criminal charges waited for me upon my arrival. I am not a coward and through my mistakes I have learned that honesty, integrity and valiance are important in growth. I face the strong possibility of never seeing my loved ones again and returning to a country that I don't have any family in. I ask that you consider all of this in your decision making. This is my first criminal court experience and rest assured it will be my last. I hope that this letter has provided additional insight into my background as well as properly express my deepest regret for the decisions that I have made that have brought this case upon you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amadou', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Amadou Camara